Ray confession reported by Scotland Yard guard

· ★RAY
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"He was telling me," Eist went on in the interview, "that for him to have shot a black man of note in certain parts of America would make him into a national hero anyway. He seemed absolutely mad about publicity. He really wanted it."

Eist said Ray predicted that he would make $250,000 to $500,000 for the killing, because "he would have no shortage of friends, no shortage of fund-raisers. He would get them to go on TV and ... he could write books."

After the entire interview was read into the committee's record, Ray was asked to respond. He said: "That is probably the most damaging statement made against me. ... It is false." Then he charged that the interview was evidence that the panel "intends to crucify me."

Lane returned to Ray's side about that time and said he had just placed a call to a barrister in England who denounced Eist as corrupt and called him "a disgrace to the England police force." Lane said his British contact told him that Eist had been forced off the job for unlawful conduct.

In London, a spokesman for Scotland Yard said Eist was charged in 1976 with conspiracy to "pervert the course of justice" in connection with jewel robberies but was found innocent earlier this year.

The acting committee chairman, Rep. Richardson Preyer (D-N.C.), promised that the committee would pursue the issue of Eist's credibility. Eist, meanwhile, was quoted by Devine as saying that he had long ago reported his conversations with Ray to his superiors and that they probably could substantiate such reports.

After a brief recess following Lane's outburst, the District of Columbia delegate, Walter Fauntroy, asked that Ray be excused indefinitely while other witnesses were heard. Preyer acceded and said Ray likely would not be recalled until November.

The committee then called Coy Dean Cowden, a man who Lane insisted could corroborate Ray's claim that he was at a service station in Memphis when King was shot. Lane, in his book, said he interviewed Cowden and that Cowden claimed he saw Ray at a Texaco station. The same story appeared last October in the National Enquirer as "sensational new evidence" of Ray's possible innocence.

Rep. Robert Edgar (D-Pa.), after warning Cowden of the penalty of perjury, elicited his testimony that his account had been "completely false." Cowden admitted that he wasn't even in Tennessee on the day King was shot, but rather was at work in Beaumont, Tex.

Cowden said his part of the alibi story was concocted by Renfro Hays, whom Lane portrayed in his book as a dedicated defense investigator who has never given up his quest for the truth.